

Geographic Review Panel 4 – San Joaquin River

Proposal number: 2001-D202 **Short Proposal Title:** Non-Structural Alternative at the SJRNWR: Refinement for Habitat Enhancement

1. Applicability to CALFED ERP Goals and Implementation Plan and CVPIA priorities, and relevance to ERP and CVPIA priorities for your region. Panel agrees with staff review that the proposed project is applicable to ERP Goals and CVPIA priorities. Reconnecting rivers to their floodplains is a high priority in the San Joaquin system, and this modeling effort could help guide future restoration efforts. Important to see if model (Mike11) will be a better tool than existing models being used by consultants and agencies for evaluating floodplain and riparian restoration proposals.

2. Linkages/coordination with previously funded projects or other restoration activities in your region. Panel agrees with applicant that it will be helpful in FWUA-NRDC Coalition and other restoration efforts especially if model is better than others. The Panel encourages close coordination with proposal C205 (SJRNWR Riparian Habitat Protection and Floodplain Restoration Project). This proposal is also consistent with the 1995 SJRMP Plan.

3. Feasibility, especially the project's ability to move forward in a timely and successful manner. Panel agrees with TARP – yes for hydrologic/hydraulic work, possibly for the anadromous fish needs.

4. Qualifications of the applicants and others involved in implementing the proposed project. Panel agrees with TARP. Modeling staff is qualified, unknown on fish staff, but fish oversight panel well qualified.

5. Local involvement (including environmental compliance). Panel agrees with Staff Review, good public outreach using existing forums.

6. Cost. Agree with Staff Review. Good detail on budgets. Costs appear reasonable considering the effort.

7. Cost sharing. None.

8. Additional comments. Panel agrees with many of the TARP and independent technical review comments. This is mainly a hydraulic modeling exercise and a pilot level evaluation of whether the model can be combined with expert advice to assess impacts to fish. Will the model results address potential limiting factors for fish stranding such as slope and recession rates? Is a 1-D model (Mike11) the right choice or is a 2-D model more appropriate?

Regional Ranking

Panel Ranking: Medium high

Provide a brief explanation of your ranking: This is potentially a very important modeling exercise that has direct application to other restoration efforts in the region. This proposal and results by itself will likely have a significant impact upon the potential successful implementation of similar projects to help restore groundwater, wetlands and adjacent riparian habitats and their associated ecological functions at other locations along the SJR. Such models also may be able to help evaluate potential future test flows and floodplain inundation necessary for implementing hydrologic and ecological restoration on the SJR system. This floodplain buffer is necessary for many ecological and hydrological purposes, and is one of the most significant functional losses to have occurred along the San Joaquin River. Having a way to design, plan and evaluate this restoration potential is very important to the San Joaquin region and this project should help accomplish a way to do that.